

THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
FOURTH SECTION
COMMITTEE "H"
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

2-28

ADVANCED COURSE
1929-1930

THE 1ST BATTALION, 9TH INFANTRY (2D DIVISION)
in
THE AISNE MARNE OFFENSIVE, JULY 18-19, 1918
(PERSONAL EXPERIENCE)

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Accurate as to terrain and general description of actions fought. Does not contain detailed information, concerning orders, times, casualties etc.

American Battle Monuments Commission.

"Summary of Operations, 2d Division, South of Soissons, Aisne Marne Offensive, July 18-19, 1918."

Accurate as to positions and movements. Not exactly accurate with regard to times and orders. Does not contain information concerning casualties and captures.

Ayres, Leonard

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Chambrun, A. P. de

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Berdoulat, P. E.

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"America in the World War." Menasha, Wis., George Banta Publishing Company, 1921.

General and statistical. Appears to be accurate and thoughtful study.

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Buchan, John

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A very comprehensive and colorful work. Accurate with regard to large operations, not always correct in details, which however it rarely attempts.

Harbord, J. G.

"Leaves from a War Diary." New York, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1925.

✓ A very colorful account of personal experiences by one of America's most versatile General Officers. Accurate and enlightening on the problems of a Division Commander in the July 18 Offensive.

Hindenburg, Paul von

"Out of My Life." New York, Harper & Brothers, 1921. 2 volumes.

No
A very interesting account by one of Germany's greatest leaders. General in scope and apparently accurate concerning German facts. Contains much exaggerated anti Ally propaganda.

Howland, C. R.

"Military History of the World War." Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, General Service Schools Press, 1923.

General in scope. Contains many interesting personal views of the author on tactics. Not accurate so far as details of 2d Division operations in the July 18 Offensive.

Liggett, Hunter

"Commanding an American Army." Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1925.

An excellent and accurate work containing valuable and colorful accounts of American operations by one who was thoroughly familiar with the subject. General in scope, it does not deal with the operations of smaller units.

Ludendorff, Erich von

"Ludendorff's Own Story, August 1914-November 1918"; The Great War from the Siege

of Liege to the signing of the Armistice as viewed from the Grand Headquarters of the German Army. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1919. 2 volumes.

An interesting work covering the World War from the point of view of the Chief of The German General Staff. Covers the war in general in a verbose style. Contains many alibis and much anti Ally propaganda. Not particularly useful as reference for this type of monograph.

Monograph-Soissons

"Bound Volume of Mimeographed Documents in Fort Benning Library." (D 570 U 5)

An excellent and accurate file containing operations reports, orders etc. Some details regarding casualties and movements are not exactly accurate, but this is only to be expected of reports written during or immediately after an action.

Moss, J. A.

"America in Battle, with Guide to the American Battlefields in France and Belgium." Menasha, Wis., George Banta Publishing Company.

A very interesting and colorful guide book. Accurate in large matters but not to be used for details, particularly in connection with times, movements etc. of smaller units.

The Ninth U. S. Infantry in the World War

"Neuvième am Rhein, Louis Hersersche Buchdruckerei, 1919"

A very colorful but not particularly well written history, compiled in Germany. Accurate in the main, but times and distances are not always accurate. Some errors occur also in the rosters.

Page, A. W.

"Our 110 Days' Fighting." New York, Doubleday, Page & Company, 1920.

A colorful general description of our participation in the World War. Accurate in the main. Details do not always check with other reputable works.

Pershing, J. J.

"Final Report of Gen. John J. Pershing, Commander in Chief, American Expeditionary Forces." Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1920.

An excellent and apparently accurate

Washington, D. C.,
Government Printing
Office, 1920.

Very interesting studies based on actions of the World War. Not sufficiently detailed to base an article on any specific action.

Van Every, Dale

A. E. F. in Battle, New York
D. Appleton, 1928.

Excellent in local color and description of modern combat. In general accurate but locations of units, objectives and time are not correct for smaller units of the 2d Division in the Offensive of July 18.

Viereck, G. S.

"As They Saw Us". New York,
Doubleday, Page & Company 1929.

An excellent and interesting work that presents views and opinions of leaders on both sides in the great conflict.

Wise, J. C.

"Turn of the Tide; American Operations at Cantigny, Chateau Thierry and the Second Battle of the Marne." New York, Henry Holt & Company, 1920.

In general an excellent and accurate work. In details concerning the location and movements of small units it is not entirely accurate.

Information File

704 A 1 Data on Casualties of
2d Division in the Aisne Marne
Offensive.

In my opinion is not accurate as it shows casualties for days when the division was not at the front, and the total casualties do not check with any other report for the 9th Infantry.

Information File

322.13 Operations of the Second
Division (U.S.) in the Soissons
Offensive July 16-25, 1918.
Monograph of Capt. G. Ranking,
Company Officers Course, 1924.

Not accurate with regard to dispositions or movements of the 9th Infantry.

Information File

322.13 Fix Bayonets. The Charge
at Soissons. Article by Capt.
J. W. Thomason in Scribners
Magazine, June, 1925.

A colorful and interesting article but not one on which any accurate detailed article could be based.

report. General in character because of the magnitude and variety of operations covered.

Records of the 2d
Division (Regular)

A set of 8 volumes of mimeographed copies of orders, reports, field messages etc.

So far as the records of the 9th Infantry for the July 18 Offensive are concerned they are conspicuous for their absence. I do not believe that the casualty reports are correct as they vary tremendously in different reports. For example the casualties of the 23d Infantry run from about 750 to 2,000. The 9th are not reported except by 3d Brigade which gives them as about 1,500. They were reported in the regimental history as about 1,400 which figure is believed correct. The entries in the Division Journal concerning the Offensive of July 18, are generally accurate.

Reilly, H. J.

America's Part. Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1928. New York.

An interesting but biased work covering our part in the World War. Accurate in the main, but not always correct in detail and always complimentary.

The Second Division
Association

Commendations of the 2d Division A. E. F., 1917-1919. Cologne, Germany, Second Division Association, 1919.

Compilation of commendations of the 2d Division. Accurate so far as commendations are concerned. The subject matter contained is of course highly commendatory.

Soissons before and
after the War.

Clermont-Ferrand, Michelin & Cie., 1919.

An excellent guide book, containing accurate general accounts of the great battles in this vicinity during the War.

Thomas, Shipley

History of the A. E. F. New York, George H. Doran & Company, 1920.

An excellent and colorful account of our part in the war. While not always correct in small details it gives very accurate word pictures that are valuable.

U. S. General Staff

Study in Troop Frontage. Study in Battle Formation. War Plans Division, Historical Branch,

Information File

380 D 1 Report headed
Villers Coterets Forest
dated 4:30 AM, 18 July,
1918, by Capt. Charles E.
Speer.

Accurate in general in regard to dis-
positions and movements of the 1st
Battalion 9th Infantry. Written sometime
in 1919 from memory and notes. Is probably
not exactly correct with regard to time
and sequence of events.

MARGINAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

ABMC	Summary of Operations, 2d Division, South of Soissons, Aisne Marne Offensive. American Battle Monuments Commission.
AEF	The A. E. F. in Battle.
Am. Army	American Army in the European Conflict.
Div. Jour.	Journal of Operations, 2d Division (Book 18, Soissons Monograph)
F. M. 2d Div.	Field Messages 2d Division (Book 20, Soissons Monograph)
F. O. 15	Field Order 15, 2d Division (Book 19, Soissons Monograph)
F. O. 25	Field Order 25, 2d Division (Book 21, Soissons Monograph)
9th Hist.	Ninth U. S. Infantry in the World War.
O. R. 3d Brig.	Report of Operations, 3d Brigade (Book 22, Soissons Monograph)
O. R. 9th Inf.	Report of Operations, 9th Infantry (Book 25, Soissons Monograph)
O. R. 23d Inf.	Report of Operations, 23d Infantry (Book 24, Soissons Monograph)
Records	Records of the 2d Division (Regular)
Turn Tide	Turn of the Tide by Wise.
War Diary	Leaves from a War Diary by Harbord.
Personal Experience	Every effort has been made to limit the use of this reference to subject matter contained in a report rendered by myself to the Historical Section of the General Staff sometime in 1919. A copy of this report headed 1st Bn. 9th Inf., Villers Cotterets Forest, near Longpont, 4:30 AM, July 18, 1918,, (This heading was given to identify the sector and is manifestly not the date of submission of the report as it is before H hour) is in File 380-D-1, in the Fort Benning Library.

Note. This operation has been covered in detail by the writer. Where possible the names of officers and the location of companies have been given. No references available give such detail and the marginal references only support the main facts given in the various paragraphs.

INTRODUCTION

The Aisne-Marne Offensive, which opened on July 18, 1918 has been aptly called the "Turning of the Tide" by many writers. For the Americans, it has an additional significance. The success of the American Divisions contributed so much to the success of the attack, that our Allies made no further effort to use American troops, as replacements for French and British units. The principle that there would be an American Army under American command was fully established.

As will be shown later, the units of the 2d Division taking part in this offensive worked under great handicaps. Their surprise was very slightly less than that of the Germans, whom they attacked at 4:35 AM on the 18th of July, 1918.

On July 10th, 1918, the 2d American Division was relieved in the front line of the Chateau Thierry Sector by the 26th American Division. The 2d Division then moved back and occupied the Army Line about ten kilometers in rear, where it was held to meet any possible penetration of the front line. (1)

(1) Personal
Experience,
ABMC p. 1.

On the 13th of July, I was assigned to command the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, which was bivouacked in the woods, between Chambardy and Cocherel. The battalion had suffered heavy casualties during six weeks in the line. Replacements were needed, and the general impression was that the division would be withdrawn for rest and training. (2)

(2) Personal
Experience, War
Diary, p. 330.
9th Hist. p. 13.

an equal strength of about 225 men each.

Most of them went to "B" Company, which had been reduced to about 70 men, during the tour in the Chateau Thierry Sector. (6)

(6) Personal
Experience, 9th
Hist. p. 13

About 6:30 PM, the battalion embussed on a French Truck Train, and set out for an unknown destination. The men were very crowded and the trip was most uncomfortable. We rode all night, and in the morning passed through Senlis, and Crepy en Valois, to a cross roads near Taillefontaine, which was reached by the head of the column about 9:00 AM. (7)

(7) Personal
Experience,
Div. Jour.
16/7/18, 9th
Hist. p. 13
OR 3d Brig p.1
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18, 9th
Hist. p. 13

About 9:00 AM on the 17th I found Lt. Harrison and a group of men by the side of the road. He stated that they had been put off their truck, and thought that they had arrived at their destination. As I had had a similar experience in Chateau Thierry, I ordered him to follow the column and pick up any men that he found on the way. (8)

(8) Personal
Experience, War
Diary. p. 322.
OR 9th Inf. 18/7/18
ABMC p. 1.

I found a French Lieutenant, who was in charge of the truck train, and asked him why some of my men had been dropped off on the road. He said that they had gotten off at the orders of the American Staff officers, and that he knew nothing about it. (9)

(9) Personal
Experience

While I was talking to him, Colonel Preston Brown, Chief of Staff, 2d Division arrived. He ordered me to march to the Carfour de Nemours and arrive there by 12:00 noon. I asked how far it was, and as the Colonel had no map, we borrowed one from the French Lieutenant. The distance was about eight kilometers. I

(3) Div. Jour.
16/7/18 ABMC p.1

On the 14th, the 2d Division was transferred to the Tenth French Army, and the artillery units of the division were ordered to march to Betz. (3)

MOVEMENT TO ASSEMBLY POSITION

(4) Personal
Experience Turn
Tide p. 148
Div. Jour. 15/7/18
9th Hist. p. 13

On the night of the 15th, orders were received to have the battalion ready to move by truck at a moment's notice, and to have the battalion transportation, less two rolling kitchens, which were to cook for the entire battalion, clear Cocherel by 12:00 midnight.

(4)

I immediately assembled the officers, issued these orders and told them that in my opinion we were going into the line again. They were directed to inspect their weapons and ammunition, and to see that the men got as much rest as possible. Arrangements were made for a good hot meal early in the morning. The Battalion transportation left under command of Lt. Mayr. (5)

(5) Personal
Experience

The day of the 16th passed quietly, except for numerous telephone calls and messages concerning our readiness to move. As a result of the check of weapons, I found that we only had thirty automatic rifles in good working order instead of the sixty-four allowed in a battalion. We were also without hand or rifle grenades. (5)

About 4:00 PM, some 250 replacements were assigned to the battalion. They were proportioned to the companies to bring them to

(13) Personal
Experience

the blanket rolls, and at 12:30 AM, the
battalion marched across country to the
Forêt de Retz. (13)

Once in the forest, a road was
followed to the Carfour de Nemours, which
was reached by the head of the battalion at
3:20 PM. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 9th
had already arrived, as they had left the old
area ahead of us. I ordered the men to fall
out and rest, and looked up Major Bouton and
Captain Worthington. Neither of them had any
further information than myself. (14)

(14) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 13, ABMC p.1

ATTACK ORDERS AND MOVEMENT TO ASSAULT POSITION

At 4:00 PM, Colonel Leroy S. Upton, C. O.
9th Infantry arrived, and had officers call
sounded. He briefly ran over the exploits of
the 3d Battalion in Lorraine, and the 2d
Battalion at Vaux, and stated that the 1st
Battalion was to have the honor of leading the
coming attack. He stated that the attack was
to be the greatest of the war, and that the
Americans must show their worth. He emphasized
the fact that the attack must be successfully
pushed, if it cost the lives of every officer
and man in the regiment. (15)

(15) Personal
Experience
War Diary
p. 327
9th Hist.p.13

He then outlined the plan of attack. The
purpose of the general attack was to cut off
the Chateau Thierry Salient. Formation for
the attack: Column of battalions, with two
companies in the assault for the leading bat-
talion. 1st Battalion in assault, 3d Battalion
in Support, and 2d Battalion in Reserve. The

calculated the march time and told Colonel Brown that I could not make it with the entire battalion before 3:30 PM, unless transportation was furnished. He asked the French Lieutenant to send back for the men, who had been put off, but the Lieutenant said that we were on a one way loop, and that he was not allowed to send trucks back or to go further forward. (10)

(10) Personal
Experience

Colonel Brown then told me that we were to take part in the biggest attack of the war in the morning, and ordered me to march to the Carfour de Nemours, where definite orders would be issued by the regimental commander. He spoke to the officers and men before leaving of the great opportunity they would have to prove the worth of American soldiers, and ordered me to move with all possible speed. (11)

(11) Personal
Experience
War Diary
p. 323.

I decided to leave my blanket rolls. I ordered the Company Commanders to have their men strip to the combat pack, and stack their blanket rolls by companies. Each man to mark his roll with his name. A part of the reserve ration was eaten, and canteens were filled in Tallefontaine by details from each company. An officer was sent to meet Lt. Harrison, and tell him of the orders and the need for haste.

(12) Personal
Experience

(12)

At about 12:00 noon Lt. Harrison arrived. His men reported to their various companies, ate some lunch and left their blanket rolls. A guard composed of sick or exhausted men was left over

1st Battalion was to lead all the way to the objective for the first day, with slight halts to reorganize at intermediate objectives. I was designated as assault commander, and was given authority to call on the support battalions for assistance, if I needed it. This afterwards proved extremely valuable, as I was forced to use all of the 3d Battalion and one company of the 2d Battalion. (16)

(16) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 13-14

Colonel Upton then designated Lt. Mattfeldt, who was Acting Regimental Adjutant, as guide, and ordered the 1st Battalion to leave the Carfour de Nemours by 4:30 PM, followed in column by the 3d and 2d Battalions in that order. (17)

(17) Personal
Experience
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
9th Hist.
p. 13.

The 1st Battalion moved out promptly and, after a march of about eight kilometers, arrived in rear of the attack position on the north-eastern edge of the **Forêt de Retz** at 7:30 or 8:00 PM. The forest was so dense that the branches met over the roads, and we had perfect cover during the march. We were fortunate in pushing through when we did, as even this early, the roads were being used by transportation, and we were sometimes forced to march in column by twos. The other units, which stopped to rest their men, had a terrible night march through the dense forest, along the edges of roads, which were jammed with artillery, tanks and transport. (18)

(18) Personal
Experience
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
9th Hist.
p. 13
ABMC p. 2

This march of twelve to fifteen miles without rest, after a fifteen hour movement by truck, was the most tiring, I have ever undertaken. The men, softened by six weeks in the

front line, could never have made it with full packs. However, I fully expected to be tried for leaving them, as orders were very strict about carrying them at that time, and most staff officers considered them essential.

(19) Personal
Experience
17/7/18> Div. Jour.
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
9th Hist.p.13

(19)

About 8:00 PM, Colonel Upton established his command post in the point of woods north of Chavigny Ferme. He assembled the Battalion Commanders there and issued the final attack orders. Each of us was given a thick copy of the division order containing the various annexes, and a summary of information. I for one never found time to read it, as it was already dark, and I was unable to have a light after leaving the regimental C. P. An excellent map, having the division attack zones, and objectives marked on it was also issued. This map with the following verbal orders was all that was needed. The zones of attack and objectives were as shown on the map. The formation was to be that previously ordered. The attack was to commence early the next morning. H hour to be announced later. The attack was to be strongly supported by artillery, and was to be preceded by a creeping barrage. The rate of advance was to be 100 yards in two minutes, with short halts at the intermediate objectives. ~~These halts as I remember were about ten or~~ twenty minutes. Tanks were to support the attack. The Regimental Machine Gun Company was to be attached to the 1st Battalion. The Regimental Headquarters Company, which had been

(20) Personal
Experience
OR 23d Inf
p. 22
OR 3d Brig.
p. 1
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
9th Hist.
p. 14
War Diary
p. 324
F O 15
F O 25

or wire in the area to our front. The Germans had recently been driven from that part of the forest, after an advance, and neither side had organized their positions. The Germans held a part of the forest to the northwest of us, and their patrols sometimes worked down through the forest at night. Both Germans and French made it a practice to send out outposts at night and withdraw them at dawn. The German patrols were not particularly aggressive and we need not fear discovery, if we limited ourselves to firing at them when they approached too closely. (22)

(22) Personal
Experience

I assembled the officers and gave them the orders and information which I had received. The following battalion orders were given. The battalion was to take over from the French, pass the night in attack formation and attack at H hour. ^{Company "A", night assault; Lt. Hevener,} Capt. Foley, Company "C", left assault; Lt. Welsh, Company "B" and Lt. Ballard Company "D" were to take the support positions; the Machine Gun Company, Lt. Wood, to accompany the support line, taking advantage of cover so as to be available for organization of the final objective. (23)

(23) Personal
Experience

The detachment from the Headquarters Company was ordered to furnish security by sending patrols to the front and flanks. They were particularly impressed with the necessity of preventing the Germans from knowing that there were American troops in the line. All officers were ordered to prevent their men from smoking, talking, or making any noise that

separated from its mortars and 37 mm guns, was to furnish a platoon armed with the rifle to the 1st Battalion to be used as combat patrols and connecting groups. Ammunition, sufficient to give each rifleman 220 rounds, was to be drawn from a nearby dump, but no ammunition was available for the Chauchat automatic rifles, and no rifle or hand grenades could be obtained. The 1st Battalion was to make arrangements to take over the front line from the French, as soon as possible. (20)

In addition to the above combat orders, we received orders that one officer and fifty men were to be left back by each rifle company, in order to rebuild the regiment after the action. Only officers and men with combat service were to be left in this group. This order cut the 1st Battalion Companies to about 3 officers and 175 men. Of the 700 men left, 250 were the replacements, who had arrived on the afternoon of the 16th. These men, most of them from Florida, showed great bravery, but had little or no training. Many of them had been in the service less than three months, and some did not even know how to load a rifle. Our losses, particularly in officers, were made very heavy by the necessity of instructing these men on the battlefield under fire. (21)

(21) Personal
Experience

Soon after receiving the attack order, I located the French Commander and made arrangements to take over his front line at 9:30 PM. He was to furnish guides, and gave the following information. There were practically no trenches

(24) Personal
Experience

would give away our concentration. They were further ordered to see that the men got as much rest as possible. Each Company Commander was allowed to study my map and make notes. (24)

The men had eaten some more of their reserve ration for supper and had refilled their canteens at nearby springs. Rain was falling, but the morale of the command was high.

(25) Personal
Experience

(25)

OCCUPATION OF ASSAULT POSITION

At 9:30 PM, the relief of the French was commenced and was completed before 10:30 PM without incident. During the night the 3d and 2d Battalions took their positions in rear of the first. About midnight H hour was announced as 4:35 AM, 18 July, 1918. The position occupied by the regiment was a clearing about 700 yards wide and 800 yards deep with its northeast side open to the open country, which was occupied by the Germans. (26)

(26) Personal
Experience
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
9th Hist.
p. 14, ABMC p.2

It was a ticklish position, and an uncomfortable one, as it was cold and wet, and no one could smoke, because we were only a few hundred yards from the German outposts. However the men were exhausted and most of them slept soundly for the five hours before zero. Several times during the night our patrols exchanged shots with German patrols, and once the flashes seemed to me to be right in the area of "C" Company. However, the Headquarters Company security detachments performed their difficult mission

perfectly. They kept contact with the French on our flanks, kept me fully informed of the situation at frequent intervals and successfully hid our presence from the enemy.

(27) Personal
Experience

(27)

The night passed comparatively quietly, with no sign of the 5th Marines who were to be on our left, or of the 23d Infantry which was to be on our right. About 3:30 AM on the 18th, I sent word to Colonel Upton, that neither the 5th Marines nor the 23d Infantry were in position, and that the French outposts on our right and left were withdrawing in accordance with their daily custom, and asked for instructions. (28)

(28) Personal
Experience
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
9th Hist.
p. 14
ABMC p. 2

About 4:15 AM, as it was beginning to grow light, I received the following message from Colonel Upton: (29)

(29) Personal
Experience

"23d Infantry now moving into place. Use your judgment about keeping out of sight when day breaks. Try again to connect with Marines. I don't know what to make of no artillery preparation. If artillery don't fire barrage, we don't attack." (30)

(30) Personal
Experience
Original
Message.OR
9th Inf.
18/7/18

As my battalion, and as well the 3d and 2d were already deployed for the attack, and had cover close to both flanks and to the rear, I decided to stay where I was. I had passed some artillery positions on the way in and talked to some of the officers and I was sure that the barrage would come down. We found later that no preparatory barrage was ordered, in order to make the surprise complete. (31)

(31) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.p.14

ADVANCE TO FIRST INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVE

At 4:35 AM, the barrage came down, and we went over. Part of the barrage fell behind us at the start, and we ran into it several times again during the action, particularly when we were forced to advance out of our sector beyond the line of Beaurepaire Ferme. It was difficult to hold the men back to the slow rate of advance at all times. Fortunately the ground was soft, and we suffered few if any casualties from our own artillery in this action. (32)

(32) Personal
Experience
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
9th Hist.
p. 14
ABMC, p. 2

The tanks were late, and I did not see any in action during the morning. I have since been told that they assisted both the 23d Infantry and the Marines. (33)

(33) OR 3d Brig.
p. 4, OR
23d Inf.
p. 24
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18

I saw the 23d Infantry double time into position on the right, just in time to go over. The 5th Marines had not yet come up so I decided to take over their sector. The Germans had withdrawn their outposts in the same manner as the French, so there was plenty of time to extend the line to the left with "B" and "D" Companies. By the time the edge of the forest near Verte Feuille Ferme was passed the Battalion had all four companies in the line, and had taken over the Marine Sector. It did not comb the woods however, or pass through Verte Feuille Ferme, and the Marines reduced a number of strong points, when they came up later. (34)

(34) Personal
Experience
Turn Tide
p. 159-160
OR 23d Inf.
p. 22
ABMC p. 2

The Germans had been taken wholly by surprise, and their barrage was very weak, when it

(38) Personal
Experience
ABMC, p.3

From my position on the left flank,
I could see about two kilometers to the
left across open country, and saw no signs
of the Marines, or the Morroccan Division.
No Germans were visible to the left, but ^{we} were
receiving fire from the front. (38)

(39) Personal
Experience
FO 15.
OR 3d Brig.
p. 2
9th Hist.
p. 15
ABMC, p. 3

The attack order called for a change
of direction from northeast to southeast at
this line. I decided that the battalion could
not make the turn and expose the flank. I
gave the order to advance straight to the
front into the French sector, and waved to
Captain Worthington, whom I could see. He
waved back and, as we went forward, I saw the
3d Battalion make the turn, and knew that he
had understood me. In some way during this
maneuver part of "A" kept in touch with the
23d Infantry, and part of "L" Company, my
~~old command, came up on the left of the 1st~~
Battalion. (39)

ADVANCE TO OBJECTIVE OF FIRST ATTACK

(40) Personal
Experience
9th Hist. p.15
ABMC, p. 3

The attack was continued with eight
rifle companies, the Headquarters Company
Detachment and the Machine Gun Company in
the assault line. Needless to say the forma-
~~tion was a long line of skirmishers, with no~~
support line. (40)

I made my way toward the right flank,
along the line, and found small groups of
Marines and 23d Infantrymen mixed in with the
9th. I also found some men of the 3d Battalion
^{of}
~~with~~ the 9th. I assigned Lt. Grayson, Adjutant

(43) Personal
Experience

if anything had happened to me on the way. (43)

On arriving at the left flank I found that some snipers in trees along the Maubege Road were giving a lot of trouble. Sergeant Strewsweski, Corporal Gallegher, and about twenty men from "L" Company were detailed to put them out. They moved out and silenced the snipers very quickly. (44)

(44) Personal
Experience

The line was now passing enemy light artillery positions, and captured a number of batteries, although the gunners defended them bravely with the machine guns, which were part of the German battery equipment. They could not get away with them, as the guns were emplaced in the open and the teams had been sent to the rear. (45)

(45) Personal
Experience

(46) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 15

The German resistance had stiffened considerably after we had passed the first objective. The assault wave was also becoming disorganized because of the tremendous frontage of about 3,000 yards, the shortage of officers and the lack of training of the men. The directions of attack of the 1st and 3d Battalions were now divergent, and the further the advance the wider the front became. (46)

(47) Personal
Experience
Turn Tide
161. 9th
Hist. p.15
ABMC, p. 4

About 7:00 AM, the 23d Infantry and the right flank of the 9th Infantry were held up by heavy machine gun fire from Vaucastile Ravine, the second intermediate objective. A little later the left flank was held up by fire from Maison Neuve Ferme, and the center by fire from the high plateau about fifteen hundred meters

(41) Personal
Experience
OR 3d Brig.
p. 2, 9th
Hist. p. 15

of the 1st Battalion and Lt. Crenshaw, the Gas Officer to command two of these groups which were badly disorganized. (41)

Near Beaurepaire Ferme, I met Lt. Colonel Alfred Arnold, who was being guided by his orderly. He had been gassed very badly in the Chateau Thierry Sector and had been ordered to the hospital, but had induced his battalion surgeon to mark him quarters. He had turned the command of his battalion over to Captain Worthington, because he was nearly blind and could not speak above a whisper. He had evidently followed the attack so as to be with his battalion during the action. He told me that Lt. Yanda had just gone forward with "M" Company at this point, and had thus closed a gap in the line between the 1st and 3d Battalions. He further told me that the 23d Infantry was advancing in contact with the right flank of our line. (42)

(42) Personal
Experience

By this time I had lost or used all of my officers and runners, so I started back to the left flank alone. I came under machine gun fire on the way and dived into a hollow just in time. I left my map and the large division order there, and continued by short rushes. I reached the left of the line without mishap, but realized that I had done an extremely foolish thing. As I was assault commander a certain amount of confusion would have resulted, if I had been killed or wounded without anyone's knowledge. I could very easily have picked up two or three men and given them instructions to notify Colonel Upton and Captain Foley, my second in command,

southeast of the farm. The line on the left was about halfway down the forward slope at this time and was not preceded by any barrage, as it had moved out of the division area. (47)

Lyons

The men took cover by laying down in the wheat, which was over waist high. I found myself in a long shallow gulley with four officers and a number of men. The machine gun fire was going high, and doing little damage. I held a council of war with the four officers, Lt. Harrison, Company "D", Lt. Davis, Scout Officer of the 3d Battalion, Lt. Roy Johnson, Company "L" and Lt. Leonard, Company "E". Major Isaac Gill, an observer, was also with us. To advance or withdraw back of the crest was out of the question under such heavy fire. To dig in was only to invite fire, which the movement would attract. As I expected the French, I passed the order down the line to lie still. (48)

(48) Personal
Experience

The German machine gun fire quieted down except for short bursts evidently fired at individuals or movements in the wheat. About this time I noticed a number of German planes flying low, and firing machine guns, and dropping small bombs. So far as I know we had very few casualties as a result of them. (49)

(49) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 15

About twenty minutes after we were halted, the Morroccans began advancing from the woods about fifteen hundred meters to the left rear, and the Germans opened fire on them with their machine guns. I jumped up and gave the order

(50) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 15
ABMC, p.3

to advance. The other officers who had scattered up and down the line, and who were expecting the order jumped up and repeated the order. The men rose up in a long line and rushed forward with a shout. The Germans, who were very much surprised as they apparently thought we were all dead, surrendered or fled, and we occupied Maison Neuve Ferme and captured some guns to the north of it. (50)

(51) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 15
ABMC, p.4

The center of the line had pushed forward also and driven the Germans from the plateau 1500 meters southeast of Maison Neuve Ferme. Far to the right I could see that the 3d Battalion had crossed Vaucastile Ravine. I later found out that the 15th Field Artillery, which was supporting the 3d Brigade, had moved forward to the vicinity of Beaurepaire Ferme at about the same time that the French advanced, and our line sprang up. The combination had evidently given the Germans an impression of invincible strength and caused them to give up. (51)

(52) Personal
Experience

The following incident which occurred at Maison Neuve Ferme will probably be of frequent occurrence in modern war: A German machine gun crew fired from a tower window until the farm was captured, when they came down and wanted to surrender. They were bayoneted by the infuriated men who said that if they wanted to fight to the end, that they should go through with it. (52)

As the French advanced across our front at an angle of about 75 degrees, I withdrew my units from the line. Many of our men were out of reach however, and went forward in advance of the French and finally came to rest in their sector. I had a slight argument with a French Major, who wanted to know why I was going to the rear. I told him that we had been visiting in his sector long enough, and that we were going back to our own as the battle had just begun. He thought this a great joke and we parted friends. (53)

(53) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 15
ABMC, p.3

(54) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 15
ABMC, p.3

(55) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 15

(56) Personal
Experience
AEF, p.118
OR 3d Brig.
p. 2, OR
23d Inf. p.23
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
Rec. 2d Div.
Vol. 5, 9th
Inf. 18/7/18

On the way down Vaucastile Ravine from Maison Neuve Ferme, such officers and men as could be found were picked up, and assembled in the ravine northeast of Vaucastile. (54)

From this point I could see that the 3d Battalion had taken the 9th Infantry objective, which was the crest of the hill to the front. (55)

At 9:06 AM, I sent a message to Colonel Upton reporting that the final objective of the 9th Infantry had been reached, and asking for hot food and water. Lt. Roy Johnson also sent the following message: "Col. Upton. Final objective of 9th Infantry reached at 9:15 by a mixed platoon of Hq., A, L, K and E Companies. Will start to dig in at once. Losses quite heavy." I do not know whether he had fought his way from the vicinity of Maison Neuve to contact with Lt. Yanda and "M" Company, which was occupying what I thought was our objective,

gallantry while operating with them. (61)

Immediately after reorganizing I met Major Fechet, who was commanding the assault battalion of the 23d Infantry and made arrangements with him for a co-ordinated defense in case of a counter-attack. Our first action was to be a defense of the east bank of the ravine by rifle fire, followed by an attack on the counterattack, when such action appeared advisable. No digging was to be done as the sides of the ravine afforded ample cover, and the men were exhausted. (62)

(62) Personal
Experience
OR 23d Inf.
p. 23

A good spring was found in the ravine, and all the men were able to get a drink and fill their canteens. A quantity of German bread and canned food was found, and the men got something to eat. I made myself unpopular by breaking some bottles of brandy, because there was not enough for all and the finders were much the worse for it, when I discovered them. A little stream in the bottom of the ravine permitted the men to wash a little. (63)

(63) Personal
Experience

By 9:30 AM, Captain Pond, surgeon of the 1st Battalion, had established an aid station in a cave in Vaucastile Ravine. Prisoners were now put to work collecting the wounded. (64)

(64) Personal
Experience

By 10:30 AM, the reorganization ordered had been carried out. The battalions were spread out along the steeply, wooded sides of the ravine for about 400 yards, and the men were sufficiently spread out not to be surprised by shell fire. Most of them fell asleep where

killed so Captain Coleburn was designated as Commander of the 2d Battalion. Lieutenants were detailed to command companies that were without officers. The officers were then ordered to assemble the men by companies and battalions; to organize the companies into squads and platoons, and appoint commanders for them; and to send out an officer and some non-commissioned officers from each battalion to round up stragglers. I told the officers that I was sure that we would attack again, and that if we did not we would certainly have to drive off a counter attack. It was directed that once they had reorganized, they should give their men all the rest possible. (59)

(59) Personal
Experience
OR 3d Brig.
p. 2, 9th
Hist. p.15

Only one machine gun crew, commanded by a sergeant was left. They reported that they had not been able to fire due to the rapidity of the advance. Lt. Wood, Machine Gun Company Commander had been killed, and according to reports the machine gun company had suffered heavily, as the Germans had recognized their loads and concentrated on them with machine guns and snipers. (60)

(60) Personal
Experience
Turn Tide
p. 163

In addition to the men assembled in the ravine, there must have been some officers and several hundred men still in the front line. Lt. Yanda and "M" Company were holding the 9th Infantry objective. Lt. Johnson, mentioned above, was in the line somewhere with a mixed platoon. Lt. Hevener and most of "C" Company were missing, and I later heard that he was decorated by the French for conspicuous

(61) Personal
Experience

Runner went to old P. C. Am moving heaven and earth with Div. to get water, food, ambulances, amm. but don't get results. Still I keep at it. Would like a drink myself. Am at Beaurepaire Farm. Send me sketch of your position. Am prouder than ever of fighting 9th. Will keep trying and hope to get water and eats this P. M.

Yours,
Upton. (69)

(69) Original
Message
Div. Jour.
18/7/18

Early in the afternoon, we saw columns moving toward us from the rear. We decided that the attack was going to start again, but they proved to be men, from the platoons, which had been left back, bringing up ammunition. This was placed conveniently for use in event of counterattack, as we had sufficient to carry forward in event of our moving to the attack. On its return trip this detail carried some wounded to Beaurepaire Ferme, and also spread out looking for wounded, who might have been missed by the first aid men in the wheat.

(70) Personal
Experience

(70)

The officers told us that this detail was very indignant about being left back and that they had had difficulty keeping them out of the fight. As it was, I am sure that some got away and joined their companies.. (71)

(71) Personal
Experience

About 4:30 PM Colonel Arnold came up to the ravine and I sent forward for Captain Worthington. Colonel Arnold told us that we were sure to attack again soon, and that he was sure we would not be relieved by the

they were as they were exhausted after two bad nights, a day of marching and a day of fighting on reserve rations. The cover and lack of movement must have kept us from being spotted by German airplanes, as not a single shell fell in the ravine during the ten hours, that we lay there awaiting orders. (65)

(65) Personal
Experience

It was reported by the company commanders that their men had an average of 200 rounds left out of the 220 with which they started. No report was made on automatic rifles, but I am sure that few if any were left, as we had been short of ammunition for them to start with, and the men always got rid of them for rifles, when they had a good excuse, because of their weight and inaccuracy. (66)

(66) Personal
Experience

The disorganization of the 9th Infantry was exceeded by the 5th Marines. Of their two assault battalions, five companies passed in rear of us across the French front and captured the town of Chaudun on the edge of the 1st Division Sector, and the other three companies passed in rear of us to the 23d Infantry Sector on our right and became engaged in front of Vierzy. The 23d Infantry had small groups in other areas, but on the whole was pretty well in formation. (67)

(67) Turn Tide
p. 160
ABMC, p.3-4

A little after noon, I received the following message from Colonel Upton: (68)

(68) Personal
Experience

18 July
11:40 AM.

Capt. Speer,

Yours of 9:06 received over two hours late.

(72) Personal
Experience

Engineers or Marines. We talked over the attack of the morning and got a very good idea of the general situation. Captain Worthington told us that he had gotten into Vierzy about 9:30 AM with a mixed group of 1st and 3d Battalions of the 9th, 23d Infantry, 5th Marines and Algerians from the 38th French Division on our right. The machine gun fire from the stone buildings was too much, however, and they were driven out. Colonel Arnold wished us luck. He then went back to Regimental Headquarters, after telling us that he was going to report the heavy casualties of the 9th Infantry. (72)

The Moroccan Division on our left made an attack late in the afternoon, but failed to make any gains. I went over and talked to their battalion commander on my left, and found that he had orders to attack again at 8:00 PM.

(73) Personal
Experience
ABMC, p.5

(73)

ATTACK ORDERS AND ADVANCE IN SECOND ATTACK

(74) Personal
Experience
Turn Tide
p. 162
OR 3d Brig.
p. 3, 9th
Hist.p.15
OR 9th Inf.
21/7/18
ABMC, p.4
Records
Vol. I
Order 18/7/18

About 6:00 PM., Colonel Upton came up and assembled the officers. He told us that the 9th and 23d Infantry Regiments were to attack again at 6:30 PM, and that a Battalion of the 5th Marines was to be attached to each regiment. He then issued the attack order as follows:
Line of departure, Present front line. Direction of Attack 10 degrees South of East. Objective line of Berzy le Sec-Taux-Hartennes, which lay about 5 kilometers away across the Soissons to Chateau Thierry Road. Formation

amphitheatre, and hence got fire from both flanks. Straight to the front the country was open and our artillery kept the Germans down, but we got particularly heavy fire from the woods in the vicinity of Lechelle. The Marines obliqued to the left to attack this resistance. About this time I passed Captain Coleburn who had been wounded in the shoulder. (78)

(78) Personal
Experience
Turn Tide
p. 164, OR
9th Inf.
21/7/18
ABMC p. 5.

As the French had not attacked and we had gotten ahead of the 23d, it now became necessary for the 3d and 1st Battalions to extend the flanks. I waved to Captain Worthington, as I moved to the left and he to the right. I never saw him again as he was killed in this attack. (79)

(79) Personal
Experience
Turn Tide
p. 164
OR 9th Inf.
21/7/18
ABMC, p. 5

A few minutes later I was wounded and sent a runner to order Captain Foley to push forward and gain the edge of woods at the head of Lechelle Ravine. The Battalion soon gained this woods. The rest of the regiment went straight forward as the fire from the flank had been silenced pretty well and it was growing dark. (80)

(80) Personal
Experience
OR 9th Inf.
21/7/18

(81) Personal
Experience

A Corps man cut my shoe off and bandaged my foot, shortly after I was hit, in spite of my protests. Several of them accompanied the firing line in this action, and I saw them rendering first aid to men as they fell. Captain Pond and his detachment did remarkable work, as did all units of our regimental medical detachment. Their

for attack 2d Battalion, 5th Marines under Major Kayser, and 2d Battalion 9th Infantry in assault from ~~right~~^{left} to ~~left~~^{right}. 3d and 1st Battalions 9th Infantry in Support from right to left. Support Battalions to furnish necessary flank protection. The attack was to be supported by the 15th Field Artillery, and tanks. (74)

I reported to Colonel Upton that the 23d Infantry was held up in front of Vierzy, and that the Morroccans on the left had orders to attack at 8:00 PM. He replied "Vierzy is the 23d Infantry's nut, let them crack it. I have orders to attack and will attack with the 9th Infantry alone, if necessary." (75)

(75) Personal
Experience

The attack was held up by waiting for the Marines. They came up shortly after the issuance of the attack order and we actually went over at about 7:15 PM with Colonel Upton leading the attack in person. (76)

(76) Personal
Experience
ABMC, p. 5
OR 23d Inf.
p. 24, 9th
Hist. p. 15
OR 9th Inf.
21/7/18

The French light tanks came up as we started to attack and went with us. We moved up to the crest of the hill and passed through our front line. As we started forward the Germans, who had had time to reorganize, opened fire with artillery, machine guns and rifles. The light tanks accompanying us were bravely handled, but they were few in number and were all knocked out or broken down mechanically before we had gone far. (77)

(77) Personal
Experience
9th Hist.
p. 15
OR 9th Inf.
21/7/18

The Germans had the advantage of position, as we were attacking up grade in a large natural

casualties were as heavy as those of the rifle units in every action, which we fought.

(81)

(82) OR 23d Inf.
p. 24, OR 9th
Inf. 21/7/18
9th Hist. p.15
FM 2d Div.
ABMC, p.5-6

From a study of reports, I found that the 9th Infantry did not advance much farther, than where I last saw them. During the night the 2d Engineers, who were in Division Reserve, closed a gap between the 9th and 23d Infantry. A battalion of Algerians was also reported as being in the line between the two regiments. The Morroccans came up on the left during the night, but were driven back to their original position by a counter attack. The 9th beat off a counter attack in the early morning and held their position. However, the regiment was greatly reduced. Colonel Upton was commanding it in person, and reported 334 officers and men as effectives, early on the 19th of July. (82)

(83) ABMC, p.6
OR 9th Inf.
21/7/18
OR 23d Inf.
p. 25
9th Hist.
p. 16
Turn Tide
p. 171

During the morning of the 19th, the 6th Marines passed through the lines of the 9th and 23d and continued the attack. (83)

(84) 9th Hist.
p. 16

The regiment was relieved and assembled near Vierzy. The first hot meal since the 16th was served and the regiment was marched to the rear. (84)

(85) Personal
Experience
War Diary
p. 329

Many of the wounded in this action were evacuated from Vaucastile Ravine and Beaurepaire Farm, by the Motor Section of the Division Supply Train, after they had delivered supplies. This was necessary as munitions for the front had priority over ambulances and there were not enough of them to transport all the casualties. (85)

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

The 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, without warning that it was to participate in an attack, was moved for 15 hours by truck, and marched 12 to 15 miles without rest, in the following ten hours. It relieved the French, in a strange front line sector, after dark, under conditions which prohibited reconnaissance. It was then forced to lie in the open for six hours, knowing that any light or movement might bring discovery, and destroy the well laid plans for the attack. (86)

(86) Personal
Experience
War Diary
p. 325
Div. Jour.
16-17/7/18
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18

Over a third of the men were replacements, with short length of service and little training. Ammunition was limited to that for the rifle. Separated from its transportation, the Battalion was forced to subsist on the cold reserve ration. The weather was rainy and the men were wet and cold. (87)

(87) Personal
Experience
War Diary
p. 330
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18

The Battalion penetrated over 7 kilometers into the enemy position, while leading the advance. At one time it was advancing on a front of over two thousand meters. It advanced 2 kilometers in the second attack, and held the ground gained in spite of staggering losses, which had reduced it to about 1 officer and 113 men. (88)

(88) Personal
Experience
OR 9th Inf.
21/7/18

It is impossible to separate the captures in prisoners and material, or the casualties suffered by the battalion from those of the 2d Division and the 9th Infantry. Reports of captures were not kept separately and I have not been able to find the casualties reported by the battalions. (89)

(89) Personal
Experience

was captured. Lt. Emery, the other Signal Officer, was killed while pushing forward his communications. (94)

(95) Personal
Opinion

The percentage of casualties is harder to arrive at. With all due respect to those responsible for the keeping of the records of the 9th Infantry and the 2d Division for this period, the records do not appear to be very accurate, as there is no drop in division strength returns although heavy casualties are reported in other places. (95)

The strength report of the 9th Infantry for July 18, 1918, shows 89 officers and 3,271 men present for duty. Effective combat strength 72 officers and 3,051 men. As 12 officers and 600 men were left back from the rifle companies, this combat strength was actually 60 officers and 2,451 men. From this figure should be deducted the Headquarters, Machine Gun Company, Service Company, Baggage, Guard and various other details, which were not engaged. As I have no way of knowing what they were I will use the full figure for calculating the percentage of casualties, although I am of the opinion that these detachments totaled over four hundred men. The figure of 60 officers is probably correct. (96)

(96) 9th Hist.
p. 16

(97) Personal
Estimate

Using the above figures the percentage of casualties for thirty hours fighting was:

Officers	%90
Men	%55 (I believe this was nearer %65)

(97)

The Division reports show that about 3,000 prisoners; 75 guns and hundreds of machine guns were captured in this action. The prisoners were from 12 different Infantry Regiments and five different divisions. The figures for casualties inflicted on the enemy are not available, but they must have equalled the total of prisoners taken. (90)

(90) Am. Army
p. 177
Div. Jour.
22/7/18
OR 9th Inf.
18/7/18
OR 23d Inf.
p. 30

Early on the morning of the 19th of July, Colonel Upton sent a message to General Ely giving the strength of the 9th Infantry as follows:

(91) FM 2d Div.
19/7/18
Turn Tide
p. 172
~~FM 2d~~

(92) Personal
Experience

1st Bn.	113 Officers and men
2d Bn.	126 Officers and men
3d Bn.	<u>95</u> Officers and men
Total	334 Officers and men (91)

(93) 9th Hist.
p. 16

Captain Foley told me later that only five officers were left besides Colonel Upton, when the regiment was relieved. Of these two, Lt. Mattfeldt and Lt. Mac Nider, who had rushed back from Paris to get into action with the regiment, belonged to regimental headquarters. (92)

The 9th Infantry History gives the following casualties for the action:

	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
Officers	19	33	1	53
Men	182	1065	58	<u>1305</u>
			Total	1358 (93)

(94) Personal
Opinion

I believe that the missing officer was Lt. Dorsey, Regimental Signal Officer, who drove his motorcycle into the German lines, while looking for the 1st Battalion C. P. and

(98) Personal
Experience
War Diary
p. 328

A hasty glance at the figures above might lead to the opinion that we had seven hundred skulkers. This was not the case. Headquarters Company, the Machine Gun Company and "M" Company were not in the front line of the Second Attack, as they were exhausted. Various groups were in the line at other points, notably those of Lt. Johnson, and Lt. Hevener; a large number of men had been used to gather up prisoners, and in addition the detachments, mentioned above as not being engaged in the action should be deducted. The aggressive spirit of the men was remarkable, and the greatest difficulty was to keep them back, rather than to get them to go forward. (98)

(99) 9th Hist.
p. 16.

The following French Army Citation signed by Petain, and dated October 25, 1918, was awarded "The Ninth American Infantry Regiment", under the orders of Colonel Upton.

"Engaged unexpectedly in the offensive of 18, July, 1918 in the middle of the night on a terrain, which was unknown and very difficult, displayed during two days, without allowing themselves to stop by fatigue and the difficulties of obtaining food and water, a remarkable tenacity and ardor, driving the enemy back 11 km., capturing 2,700 prisoners, 12 cannon and several hundred machine guns."

(99)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

It is impossible in this case to consider

the actions of the 1st Battalion 9th Infantry without considering the actions of the larger units of which it was a part.

The general offensive was planned by General Foch, and was carried out by some of the ablest generals in the French Army. It is a model success, which observes all the principles of war. There is only one criticism of plan for the first attack, which was executed by the Morroccan Division and the 1st and 2d American Divisions. No plans were made for the forward displacement of any but the divisional artillery. This resulted in the attack being halted, due to lack of fire support.

Other considerations probably made the safety of the artillery, in the event of a counter attack, more important than the additional advance would have been. Candor compels the admission that the 2d Division was exhausted, and it would have required fresh troops, which it probably was not desired to use at that time, to press the attack. A principal purpose of the attack was the test of American troops on the offensive. This was their first large attack. Pershing desired an attack as he feared that the Allies would be defeated, unless they were heartened by American successes in the summer of 1918. Foch desired an American success for the moral effect on the Allies, and he also realized that the moment had come to change to the offensive,

as the Germans had practically exhausted their reserves. From the view points of the higher command, both French and American, the attack was an even greater success than they had desired. The after criticisms, as to how it might have been better, were made by newspaper reporters and officers who played no part in the action.

Criticism is made of French Corps Headquarters, under which we were operating, for not giving definite orders in time. In my opinion, this was largely due to lack of cooperation and experience on the part of the American Staffs, and unfamiliarity with our organization by the French.

General Bullard, who was commanding a Corps composed of the 1st and 2d American Divisions, had no staff organized to perform the duties of command. He was accordingly attached to the French Corps Commander as an assistant. In reality the American Corps Headquarters were merely observers, and General Bullard's comments on the actions of the 2d Division in this action would lead to the belief that they did not observe very closely.

General Harbord, who commanded the 2d Division, reported in advance of the division, but could not get any definite information concerning the movement of the troops. He was therefore forced to locate the troops by sending out staff officers to find where they had been debussed. He personally did all that was possible at that late time to get the division

into assault positions, and succeeded. However, he was out of touch with the infantry units all during the action up to the end of the first attack. After that he came up and personally exposed himself in order to keep in touch with the situation. The orders, for the second attack, contained false information, and the attack was not coordinated with the French nor was it properly supported by fire. As a result of this attack over open country, in daylight, under observation of an enemy who had been given ten hours to prepare for it, the 9th Infantry demonstrated that, no matter how brave they may be, men armed with the rifle and bayonet alone cannot rush a position supported by machine guns and artillery. The 6th Marines were to suffer equally the following morning in a little better supported attack.

The actions of Colonel Upton were remarkable. He transmitted his orders promptly and briefly and included all necessary elements in them. His decision to march at once saved the 9th Infantry a terrible night march, and placed them in position in good order. His arrangements for security worked out perfectly under adverse conditions. His appointment of an assault commander and giving him authority to act as conditions demanded, showed foresight. The fact that he designated the junior battalion commander with the least experienced battalion, is in accord with time honored

The functioning of communications and supply of the 2d Division in this action is probably the most horrible example in history. The excuse is lack of information from the French, but the handicap under which the troops suffered was unbelievable. The faults of the movement have already been covered. In order to emphasize these incredible facts it must be realized that the distance moved was only about thirty miles. As previously stated no arrangements were made for meals or ammunition supply. The dump of rifle ammunition was believed to have been placed by the 1st Division. To date I do not believe that anyone has written definitely, who placed it. The attack orders which General Harbord says in his book that he wrote on the night of the 16-17 July were first given to the Regimental Commanders of the 3d Brigade about 3:00 PM, July 17. Sometime near midnight, July 17, the 5th Marines were found near the Carfour de Nemours, and ordered to get into their positions in line. The attack was made by the rifle units with limited ammunition for the automatic rifle, no hand or rifle grenades, and no support from howitzer weapons, which were lost with the transportation. The 9th Infantry Machine Gun Company was the only machine gun company in the 3d Brigade to get up for the first attack, but they were exhausted and were subjected to severe casualties, while accompanying the first wave. So far as I know they were

Not clear

principles, as the weakest unit should not be depended on for support or reserve. In this instance any errors made could have been quickly corrected. At that time it was not foreseen that the Marines would not come up, and that it would be necessary to use the other battalions prior to arriving at the objective. His action in placing his P. C. far forward immediately, and later in pushing it to Beaurepaire Ferme soon after it had fallen was correct. He maintained contact with the situation from start to finish, and made reports of his progress to Brigade although he was limited to messages carried three to five miles by exhausted foot runners. Upon receipt of the false information that the French were ahead of us, and that French Cavalry were pursuing the demoralized enemy, he came forward and led the second disastrous attack in person. Needless to say his inspiring example was the greatest reason for the high morale of the 9th Infantry, and the gallant action of the men in pressing forward practically without officers. The depleted remnants of the regiment were able to beat back a counter attack on over a thousand yard front, which forced back the veteran Morroccans on the left. Both General Ely and Colonel Upton state in their reports that the false information caused the pressing of the uncoordinated attack, which resulted in such heavy losses, as to require the relief of the 3d Brigade, and later the Division.

Not mentioned
in the account

unable to fire a shot before being withdrawn. Orders to exploit the success were issued by French Corps, which knew that the objectives for the day had already been taken, at 11:00 AM, 18 July. 2d Division Headquarters apparently never received these orders in time to act on them, but at 1:30 PM, for some reason, issued separate orders to continue the attack at 4:30 Pm. This order was received by the 3d Brigade Commander, General Ely, in person as he was on his way to Division Headquarters to get some information. He had sent numerous reports but had not received a single message from Division since the attack started. The false information contained in this order, concerning the French movements, caused him to rush back and push the uncoordinated attack mentioned above.

With the background of the knowledge of conditions, the actions of the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry can now be studied and criticized.

The battalion was manifestly not in condition for a prolonged major operation. It was badly disorganized by six weeks in the front line. It was under-strength in officers. The battalion commander was a Captain, who had been with it only a week; three of the four company commanders were Lieutenants; about a third of its enlisted personnel were raw recruits. At the end of the fatiguing movement described above it was sent into action armed only with the rifle and bayonet to combat the well equipped and trained Germans at the height of their success. This was forced by the general situation. The aggressive spirit

of the Regiment, and the genius of Foch in planning surprise and overwhelming fire support for the initial attack, made an extraordinary success possible. The fate of this unit in the second attack, which the Journal of the 2d Division kept by some staff officer, described as ragged, should cause thoughtful officers to wonder what success we would have had, if we had been forced to fight a war with a first class power at this time without allies.

In the first attack the battalion was recklessly engaged, and forced its way forward in spite of the fact that it was two or three kilometers ahead of the units on its left. This was made necessary by the order that the attack was to be pushed, if it took every man to break the German line. This order had been transmitted to the junior officers and men, and every individual attempted to carry it out.

Orders were not transmitted to the different company commanders constantly, and a uniform control maintained by the battalion commander. The front was wide, every man was in the front line and the only means of communication was by runner. Under the circumstances, control was impossible except at halts at objectives, other than that exercised at certain points by personal orders.

Ten hours elapsed between the taking of the final objective, and the start of the second attack. This was due to orders from division, and their delay in preparing for a resumption of the offensive.

The reorganization of the battalion and security measures taken to hold the line, gain contact on the flanks, and prepare for a counter attack were as complete as possible. It will be rare that such good conditions will occur to cover reorganization as happened in this action.

Vg
The second attack, supported only by a regiment of light artillery and a few tanks against an enemy, who had every advantage of position and fire support, and who had been allowed ten hours to organize, violated every principle of war except the offensive. This, however, was due to direct orders from Division. It was carried out unquestioningly by every officer and man to the fullest extent of their ability. It was not until long after that I learned the full facts concerning it, and realized the faults connected with it.

In this attack the 1st Battalion successfully performed its mission of protecting the flank of the regiment, and beat off a German counter attack, although it had been reduced to 1 officer and 112 men.

113
Throughout this action the battalion was handicapped by the lack of supporting infantry weapons. Grenades and mortars, properly handled should have solved this problem in part. An efficient automatic rifle with its great mobility and fire power is invaluable. Neither the Germans nor ourselves possessed such a weapon. The Germans were forced to push their heavy machine gun forward to take the place of it. While they seemed to have the advantage of us in this action,

it was only in the second attack when they were prepared that they were able to stop us. Once located, machine guns can be easily destroyed in modern war. As this fact was brought home to the German machine gunner, his resistance weakened as the war progressed. Hundreds of guns were captured in this action; thousands were captured in the later actions of the war. The Germans never learned indirect fire, the coordination of fire, nor the necessity for protecting the flanks of guns by mutually supporting fire and riflemen. Since the war we have more or less followed their system, and in the next war will probably learn that it has faults, as I believe that they did in the last war.

(The casualties in officers caused by reckless exposure may be criticized, but it will always be necessary with partially trained troops. Such troops actually need individual instruction and supervision on the battle field, and also have no respect for or confidence in the officer who issues his orders from some covered point.) On the other hand, they possess what has been aptly called the valor of ignorance, and will follow wherever an officer or non-commissioned officer will lead the way.

The conduct of the men of the Ninth Infantry was exceptionally good under adverse circumstances. The long wait in the jump off position, the successful pushing of the first attack, not only in their own, but in adjacent sectors, and finally the spirited and uncompromising manner in which they made the second attack in the face of hopeless odds, showed

a high degree of discipline and was a proof of courage and fidelity. This discipline was a higher thing than the mere bowing down to class in the abject obedience sometimes advocated. It was supported by pride of service, regiment and self, and by loyalty to commanders, comrades and country. It was instilled by example of the officers and by instruction in the Regimental History. The worst punishment that could be promised a man of the Ninth Infantry was that he would be transferred out of the regiment, because he was not good enough to make a worthy soldier. The officers were always impressed with the fact that it was their duty to care for the men, and that one of the worst faults was to make the men suffer unnecessary hardships, because of laziness or lack of foresight or supervision.

The example set by the higher officers, General Ely, Colonel Upton, Colonel Arnold, Major Bouton and Captain Worthington in self sacrifice and devotion to duty were an inspiration to all. Two of them lost their lives in this action and two of them so impaired their health as to never fully recover. Such examples are proofs of sincerity that are a proof against the attacks of enemy or defeatist propaganda, and strengthen the morale of a regiment against faintheartedness in any form.

LESSONS

The first attack in this offensive was an incredible success, because it had been carefully planned in accordance with all the Principles of

War by Marshal Foch, a master tactician. It had a definite objective, which had in view the greater objective of destroying the German Army. It took the offensive vigorously. It was perfectly coordinated with a simple plan. All subordinate leaders cooperated to make it a success. Under cover of perfect security measures, it was a perfect surprise. The principles of Movement, Mass and Economy of Force were applied in the fullest degree in the assembling of the force, and launching of the strongly supported attack. Even the handicaps under which the units of the 2d Division suffered did not in any way hinder the attack, as the morale of the men overcame their sense of fatigue and the support of the French Artillery and Tanks made their own supporting weapons unnecessary.

The second attack failed because it violated every principle of war except that of the Offensive. It had no reasonable objective and failed to reach the one assigned. There was little or no cooperation or coordination as far as plans for the attack were concerned. The false information on which the attack was based was a violation of all principles of cooperation or even fair treatment. The already alarmed enemy was given ten hours to prepare for the attack, hence there was no surprise. No security was given either by terrain, weather or supporting fires. The Principles of Mass, Economy of Force and Movement were not applied. The Principle of Simplicity was perhaps followed in lack of detail and planning, but in the light of considering the plan workable

it was grossly violated.

Training is essential to success in modern battle. Men must be taught the technique of movement and the use of weapons. Proper advantage of ground and cover should be taught.

Unity of command is essential, and it should be particularly used to insure proper coordination of the various combattant units. Cooperation is necessary, but coordination is indispensable.

The dissemination of orders to junior officers, and where they concern them to men is of great value. (It encourages initiative, promotes coordination and acts as a check on impulsive individuals whose self inspired actions might otherwise conflict with the plan of attack.)

Proper communications are essential to control mobility and to prompt ability to take advantage of conditions as they arise. Proper fire support is entirely dependent upon them, as is any other detail requiring coordination.

Plans calling for simple and direct movements for smaller units give greater success. Sharp turns in direction of the attack always cause a certain amount of confusion in the heat and excitement of battle.

Some means of keeping informed of the condition and location of the front line must be had by higher commanders. If this cannot be accomplished by reports from the front line units and the Air Service, it must be gotten by sending forward staff officers to observe and return with the desired information.

V. 8 } (False information designed to spur troops to further efforts is almost always fatal to success. First because the troops act on it, and suffer in consequence, and second because it eventually lowers their confidence in the commander and hence has an adverse effect on their morale.)

The outstanding technical lesson of this action is that the increase in the effectiveness of modern weapons has made fire power a decisive factor, if not the decisive factor in war. The field artillery has long wrestled with the problem of maintaining mobility, in order to always be within supporting distance of the advancing attack. During the world war the infantry developed the machine guns and howitzer weapons to give close up support, that the artillery could not always give. With the development of these weapons and the tank, the Infantry faced the problem of mobility itself. Due to the fact that these weapons can be carried for short distances by hand, and to the fact that it is comforting to a battalion commander to have them under his command, they were frequently assigned or attached to the Infantry Battalions. This practice was followed by the Germans to the end of the war, and was adopted by many American units, although our organization at that time contemplated the coordinated use of machine guns under the command of a Brigade or Division Machine Gun Officer.

The fact that supporting fire will be necessary is unquestioned. The method of getting it is always a subject of disagreement.

I do not think that anyone will deny that coordinated fire gives the best results. Further I do not believe that anyone will deny that guns placed far forward are extremely vulnerable. The thousands of guns lost by the Germans prove this. Last, most machine gunners know, and any test against moving targets on the range will prove, that due to its mobility and flexibility the automatic rifle or machine rifle as it is now called in the American Army, is more effective than the machine gun at all ranges up to 600 yards. Neither the Germans nor Americans had an efficient automatic rifle in the world war, and this forced them to push the machine gun forward.

On long advances the machine gunners were never able to keep up during the war. As they were recognized by their loads they also suffered heavy casualties without an opportunity to engage the enemy. The guns of the reserve and support battalions were usually idle, and on many occasions when they were used for initial barrages were unable to catch up with their battalions. Another bad feature of pushing the guns too far forward is that if the battalion to which they are attached or assigned is pinned to the ground, so are they.

Several American, French and British Divisions used the method of combining supporting weapons under the command of a single officer, who was responsible for continuous fire support by use of the artillery method of leapfrogging

units. This method permits the use of transportation for the movement of units, echelons the units in depth for attack or defense, insures a large proportion of batteries always in position to deliver supporting fire, and above all insures coordination of fire. It does not in any way prohibit the attachment of guns to front line units, if necessary, and it does insure uniformity of training.

Increased range of the mortar and increased mobility and speed of tractors point even more to the desirability of combining mortar groups. It is almost impossible for men to carry a mortar and its ammunition by hand. (The single mortar now allotted to a battalion could not accomplish much and is very vulnerable. Contrast it with a battery of 4 to 12 mortars mounted on Christie Chassis rushing forward at forty miles per hour over any ground, with a plentiful ammunition supply, firing at the rate of fifteen rounds per minute and rushing away before any enemy retaliation could destroy it, to return when needed.)

In my opinion, the division of the supporting infantry weapons, among the battalions is in the nature of a piecemeal engagement from the view point of the higher unit commander. By judicious placing of batteries in echelon and coordinating their fire he has a powerful weapon for protecting his flanks, for breaking up counterattacks, and for maintaining the defense even if some unforeseen event breaks his infantry units. In the defense or offense the guns can

frequently be so placed, that their fire on the enemy is such that he cannot directly engage the guns that are causing his casualties, and in many cases cannot even locate them definitely enough to destroy them. With proper training, and supervision machine gun and howitzer units can give better support through a single commander, who has six or eight times the number of units to choose for any given mission, than they can under company or platoon commanders exposed to enemy fire and observation with the limited means at their disposal. To sum up, I feel that the above reasoning tends to show that the assignment of supporting infantry weapons to the battalion, which is a part of a larger command, violates the Principles of Mass, Economy of Force, Movement, Surprise, Security, Simplicity and Cooperation.

The use of tanks was of great assistance to us. However, the Germans had developed a fairly effective defense against them by this time. They placed artillery far enough forward to knock out the tanks and concentrated on the accompanying infantry with small arms and artillery fire. This defense practically limited the use of tanks to surprise attacks, in this and later actions of the war.

The last great lesson is the old truth, that men reflect the qualities of their leaders. A knowledge of this fact should cause all officers who aspire to high command to adopt high ideals and train themselves to live up to them. Many

officers have fooled their superiors or taken advantage of politics to gain high command. They have seldom, if ever, succeeded in fooling their men. Loyalty to superiors and subordinates is the key to this quality of great leadership. The man who aspires to high command without it, risks disgrace for himself and disaster for his country on the field of battle.

CONCLUSION.

The American officer and soldier has always given a good account of himself, when called upon to do so. In this action the fact that they were heirs to the high standards of the 9th Infantry, which had always maintained an enviable record as a Regular Army unit, had an incredible effect on the morale of both officers and men.

The usual handicap of the American Army existed in the lack of the most improved weapons and a knowledge of their use. The staff was weak, and did not yet realize that it had any further obligation than to tell the line what to do and take credit, if it succeeded.

This action contains examples of perfection and slovenliness in sharp contrast. It was an outstanding victory, that contained all the germs of defeat. It proves conclusively that modern war against an enemy equipped with airplanes, tanks, gas, artillery, howitzer weapons, machine guns and effective small arms, requires a similar or superior armament, an efficient supply system and a staff capable of coordinating the whole by perfection of plan, orders and

communication.

D.K.
Andrews

The connotation of freedom of movement, and absence of volume of fire from heavy weapons has passed from open warfare, and each improvement in cross country transportation means deadlier weapons under deadlier conditions. Mere numbers and bravery avail little in the face of modern weapons. The war in France is often referred to by students, as trench warfare. So far as the Americans were concerned, it was fought in the open. The enormous size of the armies did to some extent protect the lines of communication. In truly open warfare, as I see it, the problem of protecting the line of communications will be added, but none of the combat problems of the World War will be taken away, unless we are fighting some weak and backward nation, lacking in modern weapons.

V.G.

6. The first attack on the 18th of July by the Infantry of the 2d Division was successful because

- (1) Of the unusually effective fire of American supporting infantry weapons
- (2) It was perfectly planned and strongly supported
- (3) It was fought in midwinter
- (4) The Germans were exhausted.

Answer 2

7. The second attack on the 18th of July by the Infantry of the 2d Division had poor success because

- (1) It was hastily planned and poorly supported
- (2) It was poorly executed by the infantry
- (3) The ground was covered with brush and obstacles
- (4) Poor visibility made control difficult.

Answer 1

8. In the Offensive of July 18, the town of Vierzy lay in the Zone of Advance of the

- (1) Morrocans
- (2) Algerians
- (3) 23d Infantry
- (4) 1st Division

Answer 3

9. During the Offensive of July 18, Maison Neuve Ferme was captured by the

- (1) 1st Battalion 9th Infantry
- (2) 3d Battalion 18th Infantry
- (3) Moroccan Division
- (4) 2d Battalion 23d Infantry

Answer 1

10. During the Offensive of July 18, the Ninth Infantry was relieved from the line after

- (1) Two days
- (2) Ten days
- (3) Fifteen days
- (4) Thirty days

Answer 1

QUESTIONS ON THE AISNE MARNE OFFENSIVE 18 JULY, 1918.

1. During the Offensive of July 18th, the Ninth U. S. Infantry was commanded by

(1) Leroy S. Upton

(2) ~~Preston Brown~~

(3) Henry Smith

(4) Paul B. Malone

Answer 1

2. In the Offensive of July 18th, the movement of infantry units to their assault position was carried out

(1) Several days in advance

(2) In an orderly and well planned manner

(3) With every consideration for the troops

(4) In a hurried manner which resulted in unnecessary hardship and fatigue. Answer 4

3. During the Offensive of July 18th, the supply of food, and ammunition to the infantry units of the 2d Division was

(1) Interrupted by enemy shell fire

(2) Perfectly carried without interruption

(3) Carried out with great difficulty

(4) Very poor, because it was not planned in advance. Answer 4

4. During the first attack on July 18th, communication between 2d Division Headquarters and subordinate units was

(1) Perfectly maintained

(2) Maintained with difficulty under shell fire

(3) Cut off by the Germans

(4) Poorly maintained because of its distance in rear Answer 4

5. In the first attack on July 18th, the 1st Battalion Ninth Infantry was

(1) Not engaged

(2) An assault battalion

(3) In support

(4) In reserve

Answer 2

GENERAL MAP
1ST BATTALION 9TH INFANTRY
AISNE-MARNE 18-19 JULY 1918

SCALE 1/200,000



0 5 10 15 KM.

map Charles E. Speer 2-28



